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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 000417

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR TILGHMAN, INL/LP BOZZOLO, DS/IP/WHA,  
DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/OPO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2018

TAGS: SNAR ASEC PREL JM

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: MURDER MOST FOUL -- 564 DEAD FOR THE  
PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 11 MAY

REF: KINGSTON 409

Classified By: Charge James T. Heg for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

**¶11.** (SBU) Summary: As of May 11, 2008, murders to date have reached 564. There have been nearly 100 people killed, mostly in the Kingston Metro area since the beginning of May. Half are attributed to gang violence. There is some concern that the violence could be political overtones, given the rumors of an impending general election. However, one school of thought believes that it is a matter of too many guns and people willing to use them. While not at the record numbers set in 2005, 2008 is already eclipsing 2007 as one of the bloodiest years in memory. End Summary

**¶12.** (U) Even Jamaicans, who are unfortunately accustomed to violence, have been shocked by the seemingly unending and gruesome bloodletting in several of the Kingston Corporate Area's grittier neighborhoods, Kingston Central, Eastern, St. Andrew Central, North and South. Since the end of April, island-wide nearly 100 people have been murdered. The victims are mostly women and children, and many have been killed in their homes as marauding gangs sweep through these neighborhoods unchecked by police. If the murder rate continues, with 40-50 persons killed per week, May 2008 will see more than 650 persons dead, not nearly the record number of 746 set in May 2005, the bloodiest year in recent history, but horrible nonetheless.

**¶13.** (U) During the week of May 5, the opposition People's National Party, Shadow Minister of National Security, Peter Phillips called on the government to speak out on its anti-crime plan. On May 8, the Minister of National Security, Derrick Smith, and Commissioner of Police, Hardley Lewin met with Prime Minister Golding to discuss the rampant killings. Golding apparently decided that the "study on crime" which he called for at CARICOM regional security meeting in April, needed to be put on hold so that actual crime prevention could occur. As a result of that meeting it was announced that Assistant Commissioner of Police Leslie Green's Major Investigation Task Force (MIT) and Assistant Commissioner of Police Glenmore Hinds specialized unit "Kingfish," would tackle solving the crime wave. (Note: Leslie Green is a former officer from London's Metropolitan Police Force.) It is also likely no coincidence that on the heels of the May 8 meeting, the media has been full of reports that Smith will be replaced as the Minister of National Security (Septel).

**¶14.** (C) According to Green, the May 9 announcement, particularly the inclusion of Hinds, was just a sop to the media, as Kingfish is already conducting operations in the area where Hinds's men are now supposed to concentrate. Green sees no value in naming Hinds to this job, as he is not an operational leader. Green admits that naming his team the Major Investigation Task Force is just a repackaging of their current responsibilities to investigate all major shootings

in Kingston.

¶ 15. (C) The neighborhoods that have been the most volatile, Green says, police themselves. There is gunfire and violence there on a daily basis and the although he and his men will come in and investigate the crimes once they have occurred, the Commissioner should instead step on the Divisional Commanders and make them act to prevent the violence from erupting. Green confirms that each week, Lewin is tasking his senior staff to act to prevent crime. Unfortunately, the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Operations, Linval Bailey is sitting on his hands. Green thinks that Lewin simply does not have the time or energy to fight with Bailey as he is so occupied fighting larger problems within the force, notably corruption.

¶ 16. (C) While Green's MIT is charged with the post-murder investigations, and not with anti-crime, Green is so fed up particularly with DCP Bailey's inaction, that he intends to go around him directly to the Divisional Commanders, and force them into action. Green plans to lay out for the Divisional Commanders an anti-crime plan and back it up with intelligence from his MIT intelligence unit. Green is confident if he pushes them, they will act. According to Green, in Kingston, to shut down the spiraling gang crime is simple. The police have to take a block by block approach, sweep the neighborhoods house by house, and start collecting guns and making arrests. A classic anti-gang, zero tolerance approach is needed; broken tail light or failure to signal, arrest; unlicensed firearm, arrest; littering, arrest.

¶ 17. (C) Green sees political overtones to the gang warfare in Kingston's neighborhoods. However, Vincent "Dave" Anderson, a former Special Advisor to the ex-Minister of National Security does not. Anderson believes that it is unfortunately the result of too many guns on the streets and people willing to use them. As an example, he cites a particularly nasty spate of killings over the March Easter weekend, which at their core were the result of two men fighting over a girl. With a general election rumored for this summer (Reftel), Post will continue to monitor the violence to determine if there are political motives.  
Johnson